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ABSTRACT

The Student Health Promoter (SHP) program at the University of Arizona is a campus-based service designed to offer students an opportunity to increase their awareness of wellness activities through the use of peer counseling techniques. SHP participants are undergraduate students not necessarily enrolled in health education who serve as referral services for both campus and community health agencies. The SHP training program is a three-credit course and offers curriculum areas relating to self-care, counseling skills, general knowledge of disease and protocol treatments, general pharmacology of nonprescription drugs, health risk assessment, understanding of the University's health manual, cardiopulmonary resuscitation and basic first aid, and contraceptive information and education. Student progress during the training period is monitored by both observation and performance indicators. Selection of trainees for the program is based on a combination of personal and academic qualifications. (LH)

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"THE STUDENT AS A CATALYST FOR CHANGE"

by

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The Student health Promoter (SHP) program at the University of Arizona is an active campus-based service designed to offer students an opportunity to increase their own awareness of health risks, and a chance to more actively consider their responsibility for well-being.

The SHP program is the catalyst for a health awareness that the student could carry on by himself if he makes the choice to do so. There is no end to the awareness, and it is up to the student how far he wishes to go. The SHP program shows him the way.

Descriptively SHP's are undergraduates, living in campus residence halls, fraternities and sororities, who are effective sources of health education and health resource information for their peers. The SHP's are students helping students. They are health information specialists in many different areas such as stress reduction, nutrition and weight control, exercise and contraception. Working in conjunction with the Student Health Service (SHS), the SHP's act as a referral service to both campus and community health agencies. With an emphasis on personal responsibility, the SHP's function as self-care resource guides and as basic first aide sources. Notably, each individual promoter is in a unique position to listen and discuss things with his peers on a one-to-one basis in a dependable and enlightening manner.

Specifically, the three goals the SHP's are striving for are:

1. Encouraging the initiation and maintenance of healthier life-styles among UofA students.
2. Providing peer resources at the living unit level to make information available about self-care and to effect appropriate referrals to the Student Health Service.
3. Enhancing the understanding of health and illness through educational presentations.

The training course for the SHP's is intended to give each promoter the necessary tools for achieving the stated objectives. The emphasis of the training is on educating the promoter in health and wellness, rather than medical care. As a result, the SHP's will operate mainly as a source of information and not as a source of treatment.

The goal of the training program is to develop sound, comprehensive know - ledge without overburdening the student. The SHP's finish the training not as mini-doctors, but as a peer group well informed in health education. Therefore, the course is designed not to be overdemanding for a student whose major course of study is not in the health field, or preparatory to a health profession. The university gives three (3) units of credit for each SHP participating in the class and the training as outlined below:

A. Training class.
    1. Techniques in relating health to students; self-care.
    2. Counseling skills.
    3. General knowledge of disease and protocol forms of treatment.
    4. General pharmacology of over-the-counter medication.
    5. Health risk assessment; risk reduction programs.
    6. Understanding of the UofA health manual.
    7. First aid instruction and training in cardiopulmonary resuscitation.

B. Orientation to the Student Health Service and staff.

C. Special orientation to the Gynecology Clinic with special emphasis on contraceptive education and information.

D. Independent study in group presentations.
    1. To allow specialized study in areas of specific interest, (e.g., alcoholism, smoking).

2. To provide means of continuing education and training.

Undergraduates are selected for the promoter program only if they have a clear understanding of, and a personal commitment to the objectives of the program. SHP's must be outgoing, mature persons capable of taking constructive criticism, and of coping comfortably and effectively with the students and the professional people with whom they will interact. Detailed qualities are listed below:

1. Each participant should look upon participation in the SHP program as an educational opportunity and display genuine interest in both the program and its goals.
2. Participants should show efficient use of time.
3. An applicant must have completed fifteen (15) units of college work.
4. Applicants with a cumulative average of 2.5 or better will be given preference.
5. Second semester freshmen and sophomores would be good candidates for this program due to the continuity they can offer. However, juniors, seniors and graduate students will be given consideration, depending upon their situation.
6. Students from all fields of study are encouraged to participate.
7. Applicants with overlapping conflicts must be given ample warning about time limitations.

The SHP's are jointly sponsored by the Student Health Service and the Associated Students of the University of Arizona (ASUA). The SHS provides stipend money for each of the present twelve promoters and for the student coordinator. The ASUA provides funds to the Student Health Advisory Committee (SHAC), to meet the ongoing operational costs for trainees and active SHP's. The program has received a small grant from the Arizona Foundation to help meet the cost of outreach educational activities. Additional grant monies are being sought to assist the program

in its initial growth phase.

The SHS provides a professional Health Educator as director for the program. He spends approximately two thirds of his time working with, and training the SHP's. A student coordinator is responsible for assisting the director in all aspects.

The SHP's are representatives of the Student Health Service and are fully informed about the SHS and its services. Each SHP reports weekly on his or her activities to the director and student coordinator. Subsequently the reports are analyzed and appropriate criticisms made. A physician preceptor from the SHS staff for each SHP answers questions and offers insights into health care. By having a preceptor, the SHP has recourse to a physician for consultation and review of his/her experiences, approach and knowledge. The preceptor also provides continuing education, discusses problem areas with the SHP's, and provides feedback as to the effectiveness of the promoters' work. The system of linking SHS staff and SHP's insures appropriate program review and assessment and helps detect any instances of misinformation being given by the SHP's.

Evaluation of the program is the responsibility of the director and student coordinator. Student progress during the training is monitored both by observation and performance indicators. If a participant has an attitude problem or academic conflict, it is handled on an individual basis. The evaluation is done by several methods:

1. Careful review of the SHP activities on a weekly basis by the director and student coordinator.
2. Responses from the preceptors are monitored and reported to the SHP's as a whole.
3. Students who are individually seen by a SHP are given a self-addressed form on which they may record feelings they may not wish to relate to the SHP personally.

4. Weekly discussion sessions are held by the director and student coordinator.

In addition to the traditional survey methods, the program will also be evaluated using an unobtrusive measure of dormitory trash, analyzed to monitor possible student life-style change, particularly in eating habits.

Each individual SHP is expected to work with 100 students. However, health education presentations are open to all interested students, and the SHP's are encouraged to work together to increase the number of students reached. As the number of SHP's increase, it is hoped that this program will enhance consciousness regarding healthful life-styles among the students, and encourage them to adopt personal patterns of responsible health behavior.

As this peer resource service has been in existence for less than two years, the results are still being researched. From the preliminary results we can draw the conclusion that the student is beginning to understand the relationship between behavior and health.

Creating and maintaining good health practices is a primary concern of the Student Health Advisory Committee, and the SHP program is the principle tool used to achieve this goal.

The motivating force behind an alternative approach to traditional medicine was the increasing number of students requiring outpatient treatment at the Student Health Service. The physicians and the SHAC felt that many of the minor complaints could be best remedied by an increased awareness on the part of the student. The SHAC agreed that some form of outreach program was needed and began investigating various approaches with the SHS administration.

The investigation disclosed that a peer to peer relationship in discussing health matters was a viable alternative to the traditional doctor to patient contact, especially when encouraging the initiation and maintenance of healthier life-styles.

Individually the members of the SHAC were troubled by the realization that we were being drawn into the conventional medical care system in the United States. Basically, we were dependent upon the medical profession to supply our health. The Student Health Promoter Program is the University of Arizona's attempt to move the individual away from this dependency, and allow him to become a more responsible health care consumer.

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